

Message Text

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43

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8049

UNCLAS BOGOTA 5063

E O 11652: NA

TAGS: OGEN USIA CO

REF USIA 11638 CIRC

SUBJ: WIRELESS FILE

FOR DIR USIA KEOGH FROM AMB SACCIO

1. I AM A CONSTANT READER OF THE WIRELESS FILE AND IT RANKS WITH THE IMPORTANT SUBSTANTIVE MESSAGES I GET FROM THE DEPT. I INSIST ON IT BEING DELIVERED ON MY DESK AS SOON AS IT ARRIVES.
2. I FREQUENTLY GET INFO THROUGH THIS CHANNEL UNAVAILABLE TO ME THROUGH ANY OTHER. ADDITIONALLY IT IS A CHANNEL WHOSE ACCURACY I CAN RELY ON, THUS SERVING AS A CHECK ON USUALLY INCOMPLETE AND OFTEN INACCURATE MEDIA ACCOUNTS OF ITEMS OF DIRECT CONCERN.
3. ACCESS TO THE SOPHISTICATED AND POLITICALLY POWERFUL MEDIA OF COLOMBIA, ESPECIALLY THEPRINT MEDIA, IS ONE OF USIS' PRINCIPAL PROGRAM CHANNELS AND AS SUCH IS VITAL TO MISSION OPS. THAT ACCESS HAS BEEN USED TO ADVANTAGE RECENTLY WITH THE VISIT OF THE SECY OF STATE, IN HELPING DRAW PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE SERIOUSNESS OF INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFIC THROUGH COLOMBIA AND IN CALLING PUBLIC AND GOVT ATTENTION SEVERAL MATTERS IN WHICH LEGITIMATE U S COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WERE IN DANGER OF PREJUDICE.
4. AS THE BASIS UPON WHICH DAILY COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

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OPERATES, I BELIEVE MOST OF THE MATERIAL CARRIED ON WIRELESS FILE IS DIRECTLY BENEFICIAL TO MANY OF THIS MISSION'S INTERESTS. THE NEWS ITEMS, ALMOST ALWAYS OF A TYPE THAT THE MEDIA WOULD NOT GET FROM OTHER SOURCES, THE POLICY STATEMENTS AND TEXTS AND THE RADIO BULLETIN ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THIS REGARD. WE MUST HAVE THEM RAPIDLY TO BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE COMMENTARY ON POLICY MATTERS. OTHERWISE, MEDIA COMMENTARY WILL BE BASED ON INCOMPLETE NEWS AGENCY REPORTS AND ON MEDIA PEOPLE'S OWN INTERPRETATION OF POLICY.

5. USIS OFFICERS AND I AS A MATTER OF COURSE SEND WIRELESS FILE ITEMS TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MISSION AND IMPORTANT COLOMBIANS OUT OF THE MEDIA FIELD. IT IS HERE THE WIRELESS FILE SERVES A MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTION IN PROVIDING TEXTS AND ACCOUNTS OF POLICY STATEMENTS, QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY. USIS MAINTAINS FOR ME A LIST OF ABOUT 50 OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE GOVT AND THE DIP COMMUNITY TO WHICH I SEND SUCH MATERIALS. I AM OFTEN PERSONALLY THANKED FOR THE RECEIPT OF IMPORTANT ITEMS AND RECENTLY WAS ASKED FOR COPIES BY ONE AMB TO SEND TO HIS MIN.

6. DURING THE SECY'S RECENT VISIT HERE, HE SAW AN EXCELLENT EXHIBIT OF MATERIALS ON COLOMBIA'S EFFORTS TO INCREASE EXPORTS. IT SO IMPRESSED HIM THAT AN ACCOUNT OF THESE EFFORTS WAS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS IN HIS REVIEW OF THE LATIN AMERICAN TRIP BEFORE THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. UNFORTUNATELY, THAT PORTION OF HIS TESTIMONY WAS DROPPED FROM ANY MEDIA ACCOUNT USED HERE, NOR DID IT APPEAR IN THE NYTIMES. BUT THE WIRELESS FILE SUMMARY OF THE TESTIMONY, WITH THAT PART UNDERLINED, WAS ON THE DESK OF PRES PASTRANA, FOREIGN MIN VAZQUEZ AND DIR OF BANK OF THE REP BOTERO DE LOS RIOS WHO ORGANIZED THE EXHIBIT, THE VERY AFTERNOON IT ARRIVED, WITH A PERSONAL NOTE FROM ME.

7. I AM AWARE THAT S-1317 RECOMMENDED SPECIFICALLY THE PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS SERVICE BE CUT IN THE INTEREST OF A QUOTE CALMER AND QUIETER APPROACH TO THE WORLD. UNQUOTE. I DO NOT BELIEVE CUTS THERE SERVE THAT END. TO THE CONTRARY, HAVING UP TO THE MINUTE KNOWLEDGE OF EVENTS IS MORE LIKELY TO SERVE THE PURPOSE IN VIEW OF THE USUALLY SENSATIONAL HANDLING OF NEWS IN THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM. SACCIO

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